WHAT LIES BETWEEN VERA CRUZ and MEXICO CITY

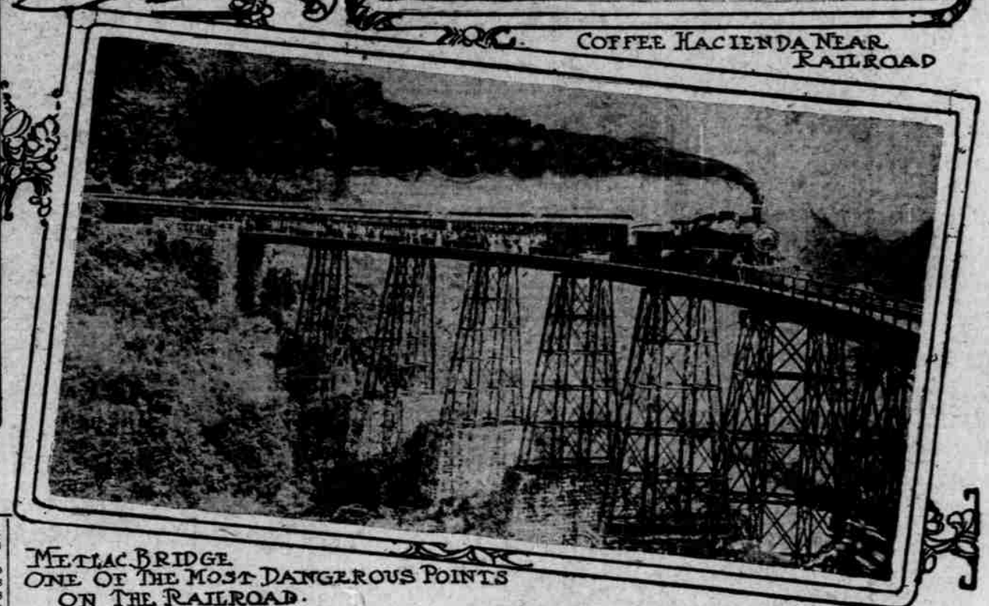
PANORAMIC VIEW OF RIO BLANCO COTTON MILLS, AMONG THE LARGEST IN MEXICO.

What Lies Between the Seacoast City and the Mexican Capital. What Our Army Will See if It Marches Inland — Wonderful Scenery and Many Historic Spots — A Journey by Rail to Mexico City.

PANORAMIC VIEW OF ORIZABA, PRINCIPAL TOWN ON RAILROAD A FAMOUS RESORT

COFFEE HACIENDA NEAR RAILROAD

BANANAS AND COFFEE CULTIVATION, TYPICAL OF CORDOBA REGION



METLAC BRIDGE, ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS POINTS ON THE RAILROAD.

IF our army in Mexico marches from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, it will journey from the sea to a plateau; from a tropic to a temperate zone climate; through all the varieties of vegetation imaginable; past villages with aboriginal customs, towns with Spanish architecture and traditions, points of historical interest from the conquest to the present day; monuments of a long-forgotten civilization and landmarks of modern industrial life.

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Just outside Vera Cruz, Laguna de Cocos—cocoanut lagoon—reminds one of the surrender of the Mexican troops to Gen. Scott after the bombardment of 1847. And beyond those palms, those red-tile roofs, those little native sugar mills, lies Soledad, where the Spanish commander, Gen. Prim, signed the peace treaty with the Mexicans ending the war, which was the brief prelude to the tragedy of the Emperor Maximilian.

Crossing the Jamapa river, the American soldier would get his first glimpse of the tremendous gorge which the railway—a marvel of engineering—had to conquer; the gorge is spanned by a bridge more than 400 feet long.

The origin of this remarkable railway, the first one in Mexico, goes back to 1854, when a stretch of about ten miles, from Vera Cruz to Tejeria, was placed in operation. The same year a section of about two and a half miles was finished at the other end, between Mexico City and the famous shrine of Guadalupe. Such was the beginning of the stupendous railway development of the republic within the last sixty years.

It antedated by about a year the era of reform which brought to the front the great Benito Juarez, patron and mentor of Porfirio Diaz. Before 1854 all means of communication were by wagon roads and bridle paths, and in some instances stage coaches or the old-fashioned litters.

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During the French intervention which placed the unfortunate Austrian archduke on the imperial throne of the Aztecs the railroad was carried from Tejeria to Paso del Macho, a distance of some forty-eight miles. Paso del Macho—Mule pass—is as yet an unknown name. Possibly it will not remain so. It is a mountain pass having an altitude of 1,500 feet, and it is here that the tropical atmosphere and scenery begin to disappear. It is reached by defiles suggestive of a strong strategic value.

About the time of the French intervention the construction of the line was taken in hand by an English syndicate, which completed the entire section in ten years, the inauguration taking place January 1, 1873, shortly after the death of the great Juarez. With the advent of Porfirio Diaz to the presidency began the era of railroad development. On the 16th of September, 1910, the centennial of Mexican independence, there were in operation no less than 15,260 miles of railroads.

Paso del Macho marks the beginning of the real ascent to the Mexican plateau. Numerous bridges of varying length are crossed, and grades of 4 per cent and more are negotiated by the powerful engines. The rank vegetation of the coast lands is a memory, and the gigantic secular trees with dazzling flowers give place to bananas and red coffee berries.

The traveler is now in the coffee region, one of the most famous in the world, nearly 3,000 feet above the sea—Cordoba. The train is besieged by Indian women with their banboos carrying tube roses, their mangoes, oranges, lemons and the delicious short, thick bananas called dominicos, never seen in a northern market.

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Cordoba, founded in 1618 by order of the Spanish viceroy, Don Diego Fernandes de Cordoba, has all the charm of a corner of old Spain. With its wooden Moorish balconies, its heavy, nail-studded doors, barred windows, red tiles and delightful glimpses of patios within, the town is as typically Andalusian as could be imagined, or gathered from its absolute innocence of sanitary arrangements.

Peacocks, parrots and the inevitable Mexican crow—zopilote, that useful bird which relieves the municipality of a street-cleaning department—are very much in evidence; also cobblestones, grass in the streets and donkeys browsing about.

Historically, Cordoba is interesting as the town where the treaty was signed between the last Spanish viceroy, Don Juan de O'Donoju (Spanish for O'Donohue) and Gen. Augustin de Iturbide, who later proclaimed himself Emperor of Mexico and came to an end before the firing squad, recognizing the independence of Mexico, August 21, 1821.

Cordoba is famed for its coffee, cultivated on numerous prospering haciendas in the vicinity. There are also very extensive fields of sugar-cane, pineapples and bananas, and especially tobacco. The mangoes, introduced from Manila in 1770, are highly prized.

An Indian village, Amatlan, a couple of miles distant, provides a curious contrast with the Spanish atmosphere of the town. These Indians, though they have lived for centuries close to Spanish-speaking people, refuse not only to speak but even to understand Spanish, and have kept up their tribal dialect and traditions with characteristic jealousy, although they are very devout Catholics.

It is after leaving Cordoba that the stupendous beauty of the scenery appears. There are passes and points and curves on this line that make a man draw in his breath, and not only in admiration. Just beyond Cordoba the railroad creeps cautiously down the Metlac ravine and over the bridge spanning the tropical Metlac torrent, a piece of engineering that is considered wonderful even today.

The bridge is 350 feet long and curves at a radius of 325 feet, with a striking horseshoe effect, on a grade of at least 3 per cent, and some ninety feet above the river. It is considered beyond doubt the most dangerous point of this dangerous line.

The outlook is wonderful, what with trees covered with many-colored blossoms, varieties of palms, creepers of all kinds, jungle and, far below, the tropical valley. After passing through numerous short tunnels, the train finally enters upon a widening plateau studded with native huts, which have for a long time been absent from the landscape.

The coffee zone covers the entire section from Paso del Macho, which is 1,500 feet above sea-level to Orizaba, 4,000 feet above. Sumidero, midway between Cordoba and Orizaba, is the heart of the coffee district. Coffee was introduced into Mexico in a roundabout fashion. Discovered in southern Arabia in the thirteenth century, it was first tried in western Europe in the seventeenth century, and about that time taken to Java by traders.

From Java it was reintroduced, as a plant, to Holland, and in 1720 a French naval officer carried a supply—obtained from that plant first exhibited in the botanical gardens of Amsterdam—to Martinique, in the West Indies, whence it gradually spread over the new world.

At 4,000 feet Orizaba is reached. This is one of the most picturesque towns in all Mexico. It stands on the site of a very ancient aboriginal settlement which was conquered by the invading Aztecs some sixty years before the Spaniards under Cortes appeared in Mexico.

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Its name is derived from one of the many streams watering the vicinity. The power of this stream was utilized by the Spaniards to run a flour mill as early as 1553—more than half a century before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth.

Today the waters of Orizaba and vicinity, notably those of the Rio Blanco, are utilized for the production of textiles, the mills being equipped with the latest machinery and operated by electric power from the falls. The cotton mills for which Orizaba is famous are among the largest in the republic.

Orizaba, thanks to its delightful climate and its many products of both the tropic and temperate zones, its picturesque situation and easy access both from the coast and the plateau, has always been a favorite resort where people from the capital and Puebla meet those from Vera Cruz and far-off Yucatan.

There are some interesting old churches and a few monuments, notably that erected to the memory of the "defenders of the fatherland"—defensores de la patria—dedicated to the sons of the state of Vera Cruz, the inscription says, who defended the country and Orizaba against the American invaders in 1847 and 1848.

It is a marble statue made in Italy. One side bears the quotation from Lucanus, "Victrix causea Deis placuit sed victa Catoni," which might convey a special significance to President Huerta.

Orizaba's market place reflects the beauty and fertility of its surroundings. There one finds every variety of fruits, vegetables and flowers. Mangoes, pineapples, bananas, melons, oranges, tomatoes, cocoanuts, mameys, lilies, roses, gardenias and many others.

Excursions in the environs are very attractive. There is a tramcar service to the suburbs and many pleasant horseback rides may be undertaken to nearby haciendas. There is a battlefield at Cerro del Borrego, where the French Zouaves in 1862 fought the Mexican troops.

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Between Orizaba and Boca del Monte, at the entrance to the Mexican high plateau, some of the most grandiose scenery and the most fearful and wonderful engineering feats of the journey are encountered.

Just beyond the cotton mills there is a somber and ill-boding rayine, aptly called "el Infiernillo"—the little hell—whose chasms and precipices would have rejoiced the heart of Dante. By this time all tropical and semi-tropical scenery and temperature are a thing of the past. There is a decided chill in the air.

At Maltrata the altitude is already 5,544 feet. Here the magnificent cone of the Orizaba is seen to dominate the landscape. This Pico de Orizaba is the acknowledged sovereign of the Mexican mountains. It is not as well known or as picturesque as Popocatapetl, or as romantic as the "White Woman" (Iztaccihuatl), but it is "the grand sentinel of Mexico," visible at unexpected turns all the way up from the coast.

It is interesting to recall that the first ascent was made by a party of American officers of Gen. Scott's forces in 1848. Their feat was doubted until three years later, when a French traveler also climbed to the top and found what remained of the American flag planted there by the officers, with the date 1848 cut in the flagstaff. There is now an iron cross on the spot.

The top of Mount Orizaba holds one of the most sacred of ancient Mexican traditions. It was there that the body of Quetzalcoatl, the Mexican air god, after his departure from Mexico and death by the sea was devoured by a fire from heaven. His spirit ascended to heaven in the shape of a peacock, and the Aztecs believed that he would some day return to Mexico.

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It is thought that this Quetzalcoatl, who acted as the teacher and guide to the Indians, was really a white man who had been shipwrecked on the Mexican coast.

Climbing up beyond Maltrata over endless curves, one gets a unique view of what one has left behind and below. More than once fully half a dozen tracks are visible beneath, with bridge after bridge. is negotiated the heaviest grade on the road, the 5 per cent one at Alta Luz, which is literally in the clouds. When clear the panorama here is unrivaled.

Crossing Winner's bridge over a deep gorge is one of the thrilling moments of the journey, when one suddenly looks down 2,000 feet. At last Boca del Monte appears and the traveler is on the Mexican high plateau. He is already 250 feet higher than the City of Mexico and still climbing. It seems almost incredible that he left the tropics that same morning.

On the left rises the lonely peak of Malinche, 14,740 feet, covered with snow. Here you find corn and wheat fields, and especially apple orchards, for which this section is celebrated.

The pulque district is then entered. Mexico is the land of cactus plants, and of these the most conspicuous is the maguey, which name covers some thirty-odd species found on the plateau. The best known is the American aloe, which yields the pulque liquor that enters so deeply into Mexican customs and life.

In Aztec times the maguey leaves were made into paper, much like the Egyptian papyrus. But even then pulque tippling was a national vice. It can be traced back to the Toltecs, from whom the Aztecs inherited it when they conquered the valley of Mexico. There is an old tradition symbolizing the downfall of the Toltec empire through pulque.

The Spaniards were convinced that pulque was responsible for the degeneracy found among the Indians and many a vice-regal edict was intended to stamp it out. A Mexican pulqueria, or pulque saloon, is one of the most repulsive things to be seen anywhere on this continent. The intoxicating properties of pulque are very small, but its cheapness makes it possible for the natives, men and women, to swallow it in colossal quantities. The pulque problem of the Mexican highlands is on a par with the opium question in China.

At Ocotlan, in the state of Tlaxcala, the highest point on the line is reached, 8,333 feet. From there the road descends 700 feet to the capital. Ocotlan has a most interesting old church, one of the best specimens of Spanish colonial architecture in the country. It embodies the type called Churrigueresque, the Spanish development of the Italian Baroque style. It is so called after Jose Churriguera, a native of Salamanca, Spain, who lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

Mexico is full of this style of art, both architectural and ornamental. It is, in fact, the dominant art note of the country, and with its audacity of conception and exuberance of detail lends itself eminently to the decoration of the Mexican plateau.

It was Tlaxcala, the smallest state of modern Mexico, which at the time of the Spanish conquest virtually decided the fate of the Aztec empire. The Tlaxcalans were a people who had evolved a form of republicanism which brought them into sharp conflict with the Aztec autocracy. When Cortes arrived on the scene they were at war with the Emperor Montezuma, and after testing the prowess of the white invaders they became their stanch allies and thus brought about the eventual downfall of the Aztecs.

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One grand reminder of what had been long before the Spaniards took possession looms in the distance as the traveler speeds down to the Mexican capital—the terraced pyramids of the sun and moon. The place is called Teotihuacan, which in Aztec means the City of the Gods; but it is quite certain that to the Aztecs and probably even to earlier conquerors the two mounds—the largest, by the way, on this continent—were as much a mystery as they were to the invading Spaniards and are to this day.

These tracualli, as they are called in Aztec annals, inspired both Aztecs and Toltecs with awe. It was hither that the Aztec sovereigns came to be crowned and Aztec high priests had their abode here. Aztecs and Toltecs knew no more about their origin and early religious purpose than we know; but through their hoary antiquity the pyramids became the religious center of these successive empires.

It is only in recent years that the earth has been removed from the sun pyramid, showing the terraced form which recalls the pyramids of Egypt. It is a curious fact that many of the little terra cotta heads—probably royal and sacerdotal effigies—unearthed around the mounds and in the necropolis, bear an unquestionable resemblance to the Egyptian race type.

A few more miles along Lake Texcoco, famous in Mexican history, and another great religious monument of the Americas is reached, at the outskirts of Mexico City. It is the famous shrine of Guadalupe, the Lourdes of Mexico. Its picturesque tradition of the Indian Juan Diego—whose tilma, or cloak, with the miraculous image of the Virgin impressed on it is seen over the altar of the sanctuary—is intimately connected with the spread of Christianity in the new world.

Historically, Guadalupe is of vast significance, for it was here that the peace treaty between Mexico and the United States of February 2, 1848, was concluded which gave Mexico $15,000,000 and the United States 522,955 square miles of territory.

WALTER VERNIER.

UNDER THE BIG WHITE DOME

"Votes for Women!"

"Of all the personal experiences Col. Roosevelt delights to recount—and I've heard him recount many," said Representative Chandler of New York, "I think the one he most enjoys telling is this:

"'When I was ranching out west,' he said, 'there was a cowboy' with whom I spent much time on the range, enduring hunger and thirst or sharing our food and blankets together. Some time after my return east I got a letter from him, saying he was in deep trouble—in jail, in fact—and begging me to help him. That wouldn't be hard, he assured me, "for," he wrote, "they've jugged me for shooting a woman, but she was only my wife."'

"And the colonel," concluded Mr. Chandler, "never failed to chuckle heartily as he recalled that cowboy's grotesque argument for his legal rights."

Single-Handed.

"No one can today realize the absolute reign of terror that, a generation ago, hung over my section of country like a pall," said Representative Lesher of the sixteenth Pennsylvania district. "Men who recall it still speak of it with a shudder. It was the Mollie Maguires. Every one, high and low, lived in constant dread of that fiendish gang of foreign cutthroats. Their open highhandedness was wellnigh inconceivable; for no one dared to take any legal steps against them for fear of their vengence.

"One night as Hester and a gang of them were returning from a wholesale murder their wagon broke down near the home of my uncle, a farmer. They roused him up without any pretense of concealment of their identity, and commanded him to get tools and assist them to repair. I remember his saying that when he went out he did not expect to return, nor did any of the family expect to see him return alive. The fiends would oftentimes murder from sheer love of it.

"But the nerve of one lone man worked their ruin. A young Irishman, McParland, joined the gang, and, for two years, bored into their secrets. Then he sprung the trap, sent the leaders to the gallows or the penitentiary for life and wiped them out. But it ruined his health.

"He is living in Denver today, and was active in the Harry Orchard case."

A Political Puzzle

To be beaten in every single county in your district, and then to be triumphantly elected—who says the age of mircales has passed!

For this was the paradoxical feat accomplished at the last congressional election by Representative Fordney of Saginaw, Mich., and that, too, without the aid of spirits or djinns or other miraculous or supernatural agencies, celestial or diabolic. Wonderful, isn't it?

But it isn't one bit miraculous or marvellous after Mr. Fordney shows how he turned the trick. It's just as e-e-e-easy!

"'Twas very simple," explains Mr. Fordney, with a smile. "There were three candidates—a democrat, a progressive and a republican, myself. There were four counties in the district. The democrat carried two of them, beating me by a small plurality; the progressive man wasn't in sight at all there. In the other two counties the progressive candidate beat me by a nose, while the democrat hardly knew he was in the race.

"When they came to count up the total vote I had won over both by a neat plurality. That's all—but, you see, I hadn't carried a county!"

What's that? Oh, yes, we've all heard about Columbus and his egg trick.

Wilson's Double.

Every President seems fated to have somewhere in his neighborhood a "doppelganger," as the Germans call it; in English, a "double"—some one who resembles him so closely that he is continually being mistaken for him.

President Wilson's double is also in public life. He is Representative McKenzie of Illinois, and they look as much alike as twins—although Mr. McKenzie is said to look more alike than the President, according to the wit of the House press gallery, who is an Irishman, of course.

As Representative McKenzie was leisurely strolling through the lobby of a Washington hotel one evening last winter a stranger approached him.

"Pardon me, Mr. President," he said, with a frown of concern, "I know you are most democratic in your habits and the people admire you for it, but really, sir, this is too great a risk for the ruler of the United States to take, thus wandering about the city at night, alone and unattended by even a single guard. You owe it to the people to be more careful."

Mr. McKenzie bowed in acknowledgment, and, laying his hand upon his shoulder in a friendly way, thanked him for his kind interest, and, promising to be more careful in future, passed on, leaving the stranger in an ecstatic trance.

"I didn't have the heart to tell the fellow the brutal truth and spoil his evenings for the rest of the winter, at the lodge and the corner drug store and the table when there's company for dinner," remarked Mr. McKenzie with a smile later. "I never do with these strangers. It means so much to them to go home and tell and tell and then re-tell again that glorious experience, living over again with each telling those blissful moments when the President laid his hand on his shoulder.

"He's got a mighty poor imagination if by this time he isn't vividly recalling how he said, 'Look here, Woodrow, etc.,' and the President replied, 'All right, Jim, just as you say, etc.' But I think the recording angel will take care of that little fib."

Obliging.

Representative Robert Crosser of Ohio does not believe in tiring his auditors, and in this connection tells the tale of a rather "long-winded" preacher of whom he knew. This preacher one Sunday had elected to give his congregation a lengthy discourse on the prophets.

By the time he had reached the climax of his sermon, according to the Ohio representative, one of the male members of the congregation was drowsing. The preacher, raising his voice until it penetrated every corner of the church, exclaimed:

"Where shall we place Hosea?"

The sleeper roused himself partially and straightened up with a tired air.

At this moment the preacher fairly shouted, "I say, where shall we place Hosea?"

By this time the sleeper had fully awakened, and, taking his hat in one hand and rubbing his eyes with the other, he started toward the door, remarking meantime in a loud voice:

"He can have my seat. I'm going home."